

**FLY, FLY AWAY**  
Professional gives wings  
to Pasco High play  
*Peter Pan.*  
**LIFE, D1**



**PREP BASKETBALL SCORES**

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**WEATHER**  
Breezy with  
sun, clouds.  
High **65**  
Low **32**  
Real Feel: High **61**, Low **36**  
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FRIDAY  
MARCH 12, 2004

# Tri-City Herald

VOICE  
OF THE  
MID-COLUMBIA

50 CENTS

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## Blasts kill 190 in Spain

■ *Nearly 1,500 injured after terrorist attacks rip apart commuter trains*

By The Washington Post

MADRID — Ten near-simultaneous explosions tore through four packed commuter trains in Madrid during rush hour Thursday morning, killing at least 190 people and wounding nearly 1,500 in the worst terrorist attack in modern Spanish history, just three days before national elections.

The explosives were placed in backpacks and left aboard trains and on tracks at three stations.

Panicked commuters trampled on each other, abandoning their bags and shoes, after two of the bombs went off in one train in the Atocha station in the heart of Madrid. Train cars were turned into twisted wrecks and platforms were strewn with corpses. Cell phones rang unanswered on the bodies of the dead as frantic relatives tried to call them.

A makeshift emergency hospital was set up alongside the tracks at the station, just south of the Prado Museum. Buses were hurriedly converted into ambulances. The walking wounded were asked to make it to hospitals on their own, and leave vehicles available for the more severely injured.

Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar called the attacks “a mass murder” and compared them to the Sept. 11 terrorist strikes in the United States. “March 11, 2004, now occupies a place in the history of infamy,” he said.

Government officials and the media immediately blamed the attacks on the Basque separatist group ETA, which has waged a 30-year fight against the Spanish government.

Later Thursday, however, the Spanish interior minister, Angel Acebes, said the government was investigating a possible link to Islamic extremists after a van was discovered on the outskirts of

See **Spain**, Page A2



Associated Press  
Firefighters carry a body on a stretcher Thursday away from a bomb-damaged passenger train after a number of explosions on trains in Madrid, that killed more than 190 rush-hour commuters.

## State legislators adjourn session

■ *Lawmakers engage in last-minute flurry; 3 mad cow bills pass*

By Chris Mulick  
Herald Olympia bureau

OLYMPIA — Gavel fell Thursday night on Washington’s 58th Legislature, sending lawmakers home with a revised budget, a school reform package and — they hope — a new primary election system.

A frantic flurry of last-minute lobbying and negotiating revived a small-business health insurance bill in the Legislature late Thursday night.

The Senate passed the bill 46-3, and as it crept toward midnight, House leaders said they planned to do the same. Gov. Gary Locke has indicated he’d sign the measure into law.

House Bill 2460 would allow businesses with 50 or fewer employees to offer their workers stripped-down health benefit plans that don’t cover everything usually required by state law. Legislators hope the changes will mean that more businesses can afford to offer health benefits, and more workers end up with insurance.

Legislators punched their tickets home Thursday by passing operating and construction budgets, approving three bills related to mad cow disease

**Olympia**  
2004



and ironing out wrinkles in other measures.

“The sun is shining outside. It’s Sine Die day,” said Sen. Jim

Honeyford, R-Sunnyside, referring to the annual adjournment date. “I want to go home.”

For the first time since 2000, approving an operating budget appeared to be a routine exercise. After using steep cuts to plug a \$2.6 billion budget gap in the \$23 billion two-year budget last year, lawmakers only had to make revisions. They ended up adding \$146 million, boosting money for colleges, hospitals, home care workers, health care for children and classified school employees and paid for other unavoidable costs.

The modest plan drew modest raves in passing the Senate 34-15 and the House 84-12.

“It may not be the big bold steps we would like to take, but given the limited resources we have, we have tried to fill some of the holes we blasted in the safety net,” said House Majority Leader Lynn Kessler, D-Hoquiam.

“This is not a Republican or

See **Adjourn**, Page A2

## Hanford officials investigate accident

■ *Hoist rolls off overhead track at K East Basin*

By Annette Cary  
Herald staff writer

Work was stopped throughout Hanford’s K Basins on Thursday afternoon after an accident led to an investigation that found mechanical problems at both the K East and K West Basins.

About 60 Hanford officials met after the discovery and discussed the possible cause of the problem, including whether it could have been the result of sabotage.

“There is no conclusive evidence that is the case,” said Geoff Tyree, spokesman for contractor Fluor Hanford, late Thursday night.

Officials also are considering whether the problem might have been caused by mechanical wear.

During the graveyard shift that ended Thursday morning at the K East Basin, a hoist rolled off the end of an overhead track system and crashed onto the steel grating above a pool holding spent nuclear fuel.

The accident occurred while work had temporarily been stopped for a survey by a health safety specialist. No one was injured. The grating prevented it from falling into the pool.

The hoist should have been stopped by a system of cogs that pop down from the track to lock it in place when it is not moving, Tyree said. The hoist is suspended from the monorail track and lowers a chain through the grating to move the fuel underwater.

During the day shift

See **Hanford**, Page A2

## California court blocks gay marriage

■ *Massachusetts lawmakers move toward proposed ban*

By The Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — The California Supreme Court ordered an immediate halt Thursday to same-sex weddings in San Francisco as Massachusetts lawmakers gave preliminary approval to a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriages in the only state where they have been ruled legal.

In Seattle, a Mississippi family advocacy group sued in King County Superior Court on Thursday on behalf of a Seattle resident seeking to block Mayor Greg Nickels from recognizing the unions of gay city employees who marry elsewhere.

The Tupelo, Miss.-based American Family Association, representing Randall Leskovar, asked Judge James Doerty to issue an order preventing the city from implementing the

executive order the mayor signed earlier this week, said Brian Fahling, the attorney who filed the papers.

“A renegade mayor can do whatever he wants until he gets shut down by the law,” Fahling told The Associated Press. “This mayor has defied the express will of the people.”

The American Family Association also filed papers asking the Oregon Supreme Court for a cease-and-desist-order to stop Multnomah County from issuing gay marriage licenses.

Teary-eyed couples were quickly turned away at San Francisco’s City Hall, where 4,161 gay couples have tied the knot in the last month.

“We were filling out the application and they told us to stop,” said Art Adams, who was the first to be denied as he and partner Devin Baker sought a license. “It’s heartbreaking. I don’t understand why two people in love should be prevented from expressing it.”

The high court moved to block any more

marriages, at least for now, until they decide whether San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom had the power to authorize such unions.

The court said it would hear arguments in May or June on whether Newsom had that authority.

On the other side of the country, Massachusetts legislators returned to the Capitol to consider a constitutional amendment that would strip gay couples of their court-granted right to marriage but allow civil unions.

The amendment won approval during three preliminary votes, before the Legislature recessed just before midnight Thursday. Lawmakers planned to return March 29 to resume deliberations.

Massachusetts took center stage in the national debate over gay marriage following a landmark decision by its highest court in November that was reaffirmed last month. The rulings set the stage for the nation’s first legally sanctioned gay marriages on May 17.

## Potato industry reacting to Simplot closing plant

■ *Industry feels ripples after announcement that Hermiston plant will close*

By Anna King  
Herald staff writer

The season has barely started, but already Larry Jorgenson feels a marked difference.

He’s the manager of Currie Seed Co. of Pasco, which prepares seed potatoes for farmers to plant. The company operates its processing business two months each year.

Last week, Simplot, an international food processing company mostly known for its french fries,

announced it would close its Hermiston plant by the end of the year.

Now, people like Jorgenson who service the potato processing industry are wondering what’s next.

“Even though we are only a week in, we are still a lot behind where we were last year,” Jorgenson said. “It’s hard for us to get seed in when we don’t have the growers that are going to plant them.”

Jorgenson’s crew can’t prepare potato seed until farmers give them the signal to plow ahead, he said. And this year there has been a lack of orders.

“There is quite a bit of uncertainty

See **Potato**, Page A2



Herald/Bob Brawdy  
Workers at Currie Seed Co. monitor seed potatoes for uniformity as they flow out of cutters Tuesday afternoon at the business on Selph Landing Road just north of Pasco. There’s still uncertainty about this year’s potato crop because of various reasons, including last week’s announcement by Simplot to close its Hermiston processing plant by year’s end.

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Circulation: 586-2138  
Classifieds: 586-6181  
Main office: 582-1500  
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© 2004 Tri-City Herald Vol. 102, No. 72



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